Nova Scotia
Human Rights Commission

Business Plan
2018-2019

NOVA SCOTIA
HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION

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Message from the Director and CEO

I am pleased to share the details of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission's (**NSHRC**) Business Plan for the 2018-19 fiscal year. Fiscal year 2018-2019 will be a year devoted to continued modernization and innovation for the Commission.

New initiatives to advance human rights in Nova Scotia will be put in place. These include the addition of new courses to our virtual classroom that has already educated thousands of Nova Scotians, allowing the Commission to provide free human rights training to people and businesses in every corner of our province. The launch of a new interactive and mobile device friendly website will further enhance communication with the public we serve.

Stakeholder engagement, collaboration, and partnerships with various community members will continue to improve the Commission's ability to address existing and emerging human rights issues, such as street checks, accommodating persons with disabilities in the workplace, and the conversation around reconciliation for Indigenous people. A high-profile education campaign to increase awareness and prevent sexual harassment in the workplace will continue this year in collaboration with the Nova Scotia business community. We anticipate that this campaign will result in the training of thousands of employees across the province using the Commission's free online course "Creating Safe Spaces Makes Great Workplaces".

NSHRC will continue to demonstrate leadership in the protection of human rights through innovation and the use of best practices, including use of restorative approaches to dispute resolution.

The NSHRC maintains a commitment to service excellence and the application of best practices in the protection and promotion of human rights in Nova Scotia. During 2018-19, I will continue to work with staff, Commissioners, our strategic partners, and members of the public on a plan for NSHRC to guide us in the years to come.

My sincere thanks go to the staff, management and Commissioners for their commitment and hard work to ensure the best possible service to the public throughout this period.

Mandate

NSHRC has a unique role within Nova Scotia. It is an independent government agency charged with administering the Nova Scotia *Human Rights Act*, a provincial statute created in 1969, with the most recent amendments in December 2012. The NSHRC is mandated by the *Human Rights Act* to help build inclusive communities and protect human rights in Nova Scotia.

The specific duties of NSHRC are set out in the Act. NSHRC has the responsibility of administering and enforcing the provisions of the Act. In addition, it develops public information and education programs in the field of human rights to advance the principle that every person is free and equal in dignity and rights without regard to age, race, colour, religion, creed, ethnic, national or Aboriginal origin, sex (including pregnancy and pay equity), sexual orientation, physical disability, mental disability, family status, marital status, source of invoice, harassment (including sexual harassment), irrational fear of contracting an illness or disease, association with protected groups or individuals, political belief, affiliation or activity, gender identity, gender expression or retaliation.

NSHRC is further mandated to conduct and encourage research by universities and other bodies in the general field of human rights, and also works with government by advising and assisting its departments and agencies in regard to human rights.

NSHRC reports, as required, to the Attorney General and Minister of Justice on its business and activities, and also considers, investigates or administers any matter or activity referred by the Governor in Council or the Minister of Justice.

Core Responsibilities and Services for 2018-19

#1

Outcome: Communities within Nova Scotia are more inclusive

Goals: Meaningfully engage, educate and support people and communities to raise awareness and address issues of systemic discrimination

Actions:

Proactive, strategic stakeholder engagement

1. NSHRC will focus efforts to increase strategic stakeholder engagement with Nova Scotians on human rights through partnerships, public events and social media.

Strategic partnerships and collaboration

2. NSHRC will work with ongoing partners in the area of human rights and identify new strategic partnership opportunities to advance its mandate.

3. NSHRC will add new online courses to its virtual campus to continue to make human rights education and promotion more accessible to the public across the province.

4. NSHRC will continue to serve as co-chair and seek to further expand Partners for Human Rights, a committee made up of individuals, organizations and community groups dedicated to advancing human rights.

Support for Commissioners

5. NSHRC will continue to develop a plan to enhance engagement and participation of its Commissioners.

Community Conversations Initiative

6. NSHRC will build upon the work of the Community Conversations initiative, focusing on research, communications and engagement activities within our African Nova Scotian communities, to address issues of systemic racism in the province.

Inputs:

NSHRC will work within its existing budget and staffing compliment to achieve this priority and complete the required actions. It will engage and continue to work with community partners, stakeholders and other government departments and agencies to achieve this outcome.

Performance Measures:

- The staff of NSHRC will reflect the diversity of communities throughout Nova Scotia.
- NSHRC will develop two new online human rights themed courses to assist businesses in protecting and promoting human rights.

- NSHRC will organize up to five community meetings to engage the public on priority human rights issues, such as street checks and reconciliation.

#2

Outcome: NSHRC will be known provincially as a leader and innovator in the protection and promotion of human rights

Goal: NSHRC will demonstrate leadership in the protection of human rights through innovation and the use of best practices.

Actions:

Review and improve internal processes

1. NSHRC will continue to refine its dispute resolution processes and identify and act on efficiencies in its delivery of services.

2. NSHRC will complete its assessment of the use of restorative approaches to human rights dispute resolution and update the Commission's policies and procedures to reflect best practices.

3. NSHRC will continue to monitor processing times for complaints and board of inquiry hearings to ensure a timely resolution of all matters.

Sharing best practices with its partners

4. NSHRC will maintain efforts to protect human rights by the sharing of best practices and knowledge of restorative approaches to human rights dispute resolution.

5. NSHRC will continue to participate on relevant Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Associations (CASHRA) working groups with colleagues across the country.

Preventing and addressing sexual harassment

6. NSHRC will continue efforts to prevent and address sexual harassment, in partnership with the business community, through the "Safe Spaces Make Great Workplaces" education campaign.

Modernize the *Human Rights Act*

7. NSHRC will continue to work with the Department of Justice to modernize the *Human Rights Act* to reflect advancements in human rights law, as well as amendments to improve the dispute resolution process.

Input:

NSHRC will continue to work toward an improved and more effective implementation of the restorative approach to human rights dispute resolution. As the benefits of this model continue to

be realized, NSHRC will be able to better direct its human resources to focus on the education and training needs component of its mandate.

Performance Measures:

- NSHRC will continue to ensure that investigations of complaints are completed within one year of receipt.
- NSHRC will offer up to four free human rights education sessions throughout the province in the 2018-19 fiscal year.
- NSHRC will participate in a minimum of ten workshops, presentations and/or information sessions on topics related to human rights in the 2018-19 fiscal year.

#3

Outcome: NSHRC is a preferred place of employment within the network of provincial departments and agencies.

Goals: NSHRC is a respectful workplace that is dynamic, embraces differences and fosters continuous learning.

Actions:

Create and sustain a workplace of excellence

1. NSHRC will continue to focus on activities that will enhance its overall organizational development.

Support for staff

2. NSHRC will continue to invest in technological enhancements to improve internal communications.
3. NSHRC will operationalize its staff orientation manual.
4. NSHRC staff will participate in regular learning opportunities and information sharing sessions.
5. NSHRC will continue to support workplace wellness initiatives for staff throughout the year.

Learning organization

6. NSHRC will continue to be an organization that demonstrates a commitment to continuous learning.

Inputs:

NSHRC will work within its existing budget and staffing compliment to achieve this priority and complete the required actions. NSHRC will work with the Public Service Commission to capitalize on existing training and learning opportunities, and support for a healthy workplace.

Performance Measures:

- All managers and staff of NSHRC will complete learning plans and will have the opportunity to attend at least one professional development course or conference by March 31, 2019.
- Increased understanding by all staff of the various roles and responsibilities within NSHRC.
- NSHRC will hold at least six training sessions for staff on issues including human rights education, complaints adjudication and healthy workplace practices.

Departmental Expenses Summary
($ thousands)

Programs and Services	2017-2018 Estimate	2017-2018 Forecast	2018-2019 Estimate
Gross Program Expenses	2,664	2,664	2,611
Ordinary Recoveries	—	6	—
Funded Staff (# of FTEs)			
Department Funded Staff	25.2	23.5	24.8